

Public Health Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism

CDC/Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Initiative Update

APRIL 2001

State/Local Spotlight

New Mexico has initiated a variety of innovative bioterrorism preparedness and response activities. Following are highlights of their efforts:

- Collaboration with Sandia National Laboratory, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and UNM Hospital Emergency Department to develop a touch screen data entry system for Rapid Syndrome Reporting. The Rapid Syndromic Surveillance Validation Project (RSVP) has been designed/programmed and is being tested at the UNM Hospital Urgent Care and Emergency Department. Doctors are being trained on how to use the system. The purpose of the RSVP system is to provide the state health department with real time syndromic surveillance, and medical clinicians with immediate feed back on statewide prevalence of certain syndromes and public health alerts;
- Partnership with Office of the Medical Investigator to improve autopsy-based syndromic surveillance for unexplained deaths and to demonstrate how that data may be used to detect bioterrorism;
- Discussions with the National Guard to determine the role of the Civilian Support Teams, particularly with respect to the receipt of the National Pharmaceutical Stockpile;
- Training for two microbiologists on PCR techniques at CDC (Fort Collins) and level-A wet lab training-course for clinical laboratory staff;
- Electronic linkages with all local health departments throughout the state, 4 district offices and their satellites, and the central state office locations; and
- A contract with Electronic Distance Education Network (EDEN) at UNM was implemented and used to provide live training on the lessons learned from the Los Alamos Wild Fire and training focused on emergency preparedness;
- Updated facilities and installed the following new equipment to accommodate enhanced chemical testing capabilities: TSQ, Agilent HPLC, Agilent gc-ms, Turbo Vap LV, Visiprep Extraction Manifold.

Year 2 efforts include the following activities:

- Expanding and enhancing capacity for emergency communications
- Enhancing collaboration between the Department of Health and partners on surveillance and epidemiology relative to bioterrorism,
- Developing and implementing a statewide bioterrorism-training plan for district and local public health staff,
- Integrating New Mexico's bioterrorism surveillance and epidemiological response efforts with the State's existing public health infrastructure,
- Conducting bioterrorism table top exercises.

For additional information about New Mexico's bioterrorism preparedness and response efforts, please contact Dr. Mack Sewell, State Epidemiologist, Stuart Castle, Emergency Preparedness Program Manager, or Jennifer Downey, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator at (505) 827-0006.

CDC Update

\$ Continuation applications for year 3 of the cooperative agreement program, Public Health

Preparedness and Response for Bioterrorism, are due to the CDC Procurement and Grants Office by May 15, 2001. For additional information about this process, please contact your Team Leader. Applications for supplemental awards for Focus Areas C and E were also sent out recently to those projects not currently receiving these funds and will be due to CDC on May 30. In addition, an addendum to the Year 03 continuation application is also being sent out that will provide funds to every B1 project to support the operational management of all focus areas within the BT cooperative agreement. This component of your year 03 application is due June 15, 2001. If you have questions regarding these funding opportunities please contact your projects designated Team Leader.

- \$ The first of a series of four meetings to define core capacity and capabilities for state and local bioterrorism preparedness and response programs will be held in Tampa, Florida on Thursday, May 24. A variety of partners from state/local public health, academia, professional associations, emergency management, and others have been invited to participate in this meeting which will outline the outcomes associated with this project and the process used to achieve the outcomes. For additional information about this process please feel free to contact Wes Hodgson at 404-639-6495 or Whodgson@cdc.gov.

Upcoming Events

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| May 15-17, 2001 | American Medical Informatics Association Conference, Atlanta, GA;
http://www.amia.org . |
| June 10-14, 2001 | Joint APHL/CSTE Annual Conference, Portland, OR,
http://www.aphl.org . |
| June 10-14, 2001 | Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, 28 th
Annual Educational Conference and International Meeting, Seattle, WA,
www.apic.org/apic2001/sessions.cfm . |
| June 28-July 1, 2001 | National Environmental Health Association, Chemical and Bioterrorism
Preparedness Conference, Atlanta, GA, http://www.neha.org/tracks.html . |

Bibliography of Recent Publications

1. Consensus statement by the Working Group on Civilian Biodefense, Botulinum toxin as a biological weapon: Medical and public health management, *JAMA*. 2001; 285:1059-1070
2. Effective Public Health Assessment, Prevention, Response, and Training for Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases, including Bioterrorism, *American Journal of Public Health*, March 2001; 9(3):500-501.
3. T Hesman, Center at SLU gets serious about biological terror threat, *STL Today.com*, March 2001; <http://www.stltoday.com/stltoday/news/stories.nsf/News>.
4. Terriff CM, AM Tee. 2001. Citywide pharmaceutical preparation for bioterrorism. *American Journal of Health-system Pharmacy*. 58(3):233-7.

Please submit items for future BT Updates to Kim McCoy at kmccoy@cdc.gov.